

On Tuesday morning, the 12th October, most of the loose flowers were made up into wreaths by the Misses French, Haase, and Kleiser, and Messrs. C. French and C. French, jun., the flowers not required being forwarded to the Melbourne Hospital. In the afternoon Messrs. C. French, F.L.S. (president), J. Shepherd, C. Frost, F.L.S., J. Gabriel, G. Coghill, and C. French, jun., conveyed the wreaths and designs, twenty-seven in all, to the St. Kilda Cemetery, and arranged them on Baron von Mueller's grave, thereby completing the memorial proceedings organized by the Club and enabling the contributors to show their respect and love for the memory of the deceased botanist.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EGG OF THE WHITE HEADED
FRUIT PIGEON, *CARPOPHAGA NORFOLCIENSIS*,
LATH.

BY D. LE SOUEF.

THESE birds frequent the dense scrubs that are found in the coastal districts of North-East Australia. They are shy, and not often seen, and seem to go about either singly or in pairs. The egg of this bird is apparently the only one of the Australian Fruit Pigeons' which has not yet been described. During my visit to the Bloomfield River district in 1894, one of the black boys in Mr. Hislop's service, named Bamboo, brought in an egg which he said belonged to this bird; he found it on 23rd November. Last year, when I was again visiting the same district, we found another nest, on 28th November, with one egg in, slightly incubated. The parent bird was disturbed off the nest. The nest was the usual fragile structure, composed of a few sticks, and being $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter; it was built near the end of a branch of a scrub tree and overhanging a watercourse, being about fifteen feet from the ground. The eggs are an elongated oval, one having a point on the smaller end. They are pure white and slightly lustrous. The two taken measure—(1) 1.38 in. x 1.4 in.; (2) 1.36 in. x 1.4 in.

NOTES ON THE FANTAILED CUCKOO.

BY A. J. CAMPBELL.

(Read before the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria, 9th August, 1897.)

THE smaller sized Fantailed Cuckoo, *Cuculus flabelliformis*, Lath., like the Pallid Cuckoo, enjoys a range over Australia and Tasmania, arriving at and departing from its southern limits about the same time as the latter bird does. However, a few stragglers of the Fantailed species remain to winter in Victoria, as some of my notes attest. Also in Tasmania individuals have been observed during winter.

From about the end of September to the beginning of Decem-

ber includes the laying season of the Fantailed Cuckoo. The eggs are almost invariably deposited in domed or covered-in nests of certain little insectivorous birds. But there are a few notable exceptions (four instances) of open nests having been selected.

Here follows a list of foster parents of the Fantailed Cuckoo known up to the present, namely :—

VERNACULAR NAME.	SCIENTIFIC NAME.	BY WHOM FIRST RECORDED OR REPORTED.
Tasmanian Tit	<i>Acanthiza diemenensis</i>	Rev. H. T. Hull
Little Brown Tit	<i>A. pusilla</i>	Dr. E. P. Ramsay
Striated „	<i>A. lineata</i>	„
Little Yellow „	<i>A. nana</i>	„
(?) Buff-rumped Tit	<i>Geobasileus reguloides</i>	„
Long-tailed Wren	<i>Malurus gouldi</i>	A. J. C.
Blue „	<i>M. cyaneus</i>	Dr. E. P. Ramsay
Variegated „	<i>M. lamberti</i>	„
Sombre Scrub-Tit	<i>Sericornis humilis</i>	A. J. C.
White-fronted „	<i>S. frontalis</i>	T. Brittlebank
Large-billed „	<i>S. magnirostris</i>	A. J. C.
Little Field Lark	<i>Chthonicola sagittata</i>	Dr. E. P. Ramsay
White-eared Honey-eater	<i>Ptilotis leucotis</i>	C. French, jun.
Black-capped „	<i>Melithreptus melanocephalus</i>	A. E. Brent
Wood Swallow	<i>Artamus sordidus</i>	„ (Nov., '96)
Dusky Robin	<i>Petroeca vittata</i>	„

We are indebted to Dr. Ramsay for much original information in reference to our cuckoos. He patiently watched their eggs in various nests, thus enabling him to identify the species when hatched. The result of his labours, together with coloured plates of four of the most familiar eggs, may be found embodied in the "Proceedings of the Zoological Society" (London), 1865 and 1869, from which I quote at length :—

"Among those species, the nests of which are favoured by visits from this 'parasite,' is *Acanthiza pusilla*, from a nest of which in September, 1863, we took no less than four eggs—two laid by the rightful owner of the nest and the other two by cuckoos. One of these was a very fine specimen of *Chalcites basilis*,* the other an egg of the present species, *Cacomantis flabelliformis*. The entrance to this nest was greatly enlarged, being in width fully 2 inches, and the hood which usually conceals the entrance (which is near the top of the nest and not generally wider than 1 inch across) was pushed back to such an extent that the eggs were rendered quite visible.

"I have now before me ten nests of the *Acanthizæ* and four of *Maluri*, the former comprising *Acanthiza lineata*, *A. nana*, *A. pusilla*, and what at present I believe to be that of *A. reguloides*; the latter, *Malurus cyaneus* and *M. lamberti*.

* Probably *plagosus* is intended.—A. J. C.

"Now, having compared the greatly enlarged entrances of those nests from which we have taken cuckoos' eggs with the entrances of those which did not contain the egg of a cuckoo, and which we took as soon as the bird had laid its full number of eggs for a sitting, I cannot but feel convinced more than ever that the eggs of these parasites are laid in the nests and not deposited in any other manner.

"The average width of the entrances of the nests of *Acanthiza lineata* which have not been visited by a cuckoo is 1 inch, while those which have contained cuckoos' eggs vary from 2 to 2½ inches. In addition to the nests of *Acanthiza pusilla* we have known this cuckoo (*C. flabelliformis*) deposit its eggs in the nest of *A. reguloides* (?) and *Chthonicola sagittata*."

However valuable are Dr. Ramsay's other notes, I must in the interests of research and truth combat his idea that the eggs of cuckoos are laid in the nests and not deposited in any other manner. How can the Fantailed Cuckoo, a bird about 9 inches long, including a tail 5 inches, enter the small covered or dome-shaped nest of, say, a Tit, *Acanthiza*, the longest exterior diameter of which is only 4½ inches? The side entrance, that hardly admits of one's finger, may be enlarged by the cuckoo thrusting its head in.

In my published remarks, read before the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria, 1883, on our Cuckoos, I ventured the opinion that our cuckoos (particularizing four species), after laying their eggs somewhere, convey them in their bills to the nest of the chosen foster parent. Since then I noticed an interesting article on "The Architectural Tastes of Birds," by M. Oustalet, of France, in which is stated:—

"The cuckoo watches the moment when the mother quits the nest, then laying its egg, seizes it by its mandibles, passes it into the throat with the agility of a conjuror, and flies to deposit it delicately in the stranger's nest."

We also have the statement of another eminent ornithologist, Dr. Sharpe, of the British Museum, who says:—

"The fact of the cuckoo carrying her egg in her bill to deposit it in the nest of her victim is now generally admitted."

If such be possible with the European cuckoo, why not with our Australian species also? The following note received from Mr. Wm. P. Best, Branxholme, Victoria, is, I think, conclusive evidence on the subject as far as this species is concerned:—

"In the season of 1888 I shot a Fantailed Cuckoo. It was almost the first bird I had seen or heard in the season. On dissection it proved a specially interesting specimen, as in its ovary I found a nearly perfect egg, and in its gizzard another egg, which, though much broken, was evidently an egg of the same species, probably of the same bird. The season was a late one, and the

conclusion I drew was, that the bird had carried the egg about for a considerable time, and, being unable to find a suitable nest, had simply swallowed it."

By permission I quote the following notes from the diary of the Rev. H. T. Hull, Tasmania :—

"6th October, 1877.—Found nest of *Acanthiza diemenensis*, with egg of *Cacomantis flabelliformis*. The three eggs of *Acanthiza* were all dented, as if the larger egg had been roughly deposited on the top of them."

"15th November.—Found nest of *Acanthiza diemenensis*, two eggs broken, with young far advanced, but dead; fresh egg of cuckoo, *flabelliformis*."

During my own visit to Tasmania, October, 1883, the overseer at Ridgeside brought under my notice a nest of the Tasmanian Tit, *Acanthiza*, in a gorse hedge, from which he had just abstracted the egg of the Fantailed Cuckoo. The building of the nest had apparently just been completed, and was used first by the cuckoo. And, strange to relate, although the entrance of the nest was enlarged by the overseer to abstract the cuckoo's egg, the enlargement did not offend the little Tit, because three days afterwards she laid her first egg, and my subsequent visits to the nest proved that she finished her complement.

Another note I made on the mainland during an excursion of the Field Naturalists' Club reads thus :—"15.10.92—Wandong.—Egg of Fantailed Cuckoo in Tit's, *Acanthiza*, nest with one egg of the Tit. Eggs could be seen from outside. Evidently the entrance had been somewhat enlarged, possibly by the head of the cuckoo when depositing the egg."

Perhaps I should have placed a query against the Large-billed Scrub-Tit, *Sericornis*, as a foster-parent of the Fantailed Cuckoo, for, although the parasitical bird's eggs I found in the "Big Scrub," Richmond River, New South Wales, resembled those of the Fantailed Cuckoo, they were slightly different to those taken from *Acanthizas*' nests in Victoria and Tasmania.

The following letter appeared in the *Victorian Naturalist*, December, 1891, above the name of C. French, jun. :—

"A friend of mine living near Oakleigh informs me that one day, when out collecting, he came across a nest of the White-eared Honey-eater, *P. leucotis*, ready for eggs, and on visiting the same nest the following day, it contained an egg of the Pallid Cuckoo, *C. pallidus*, which he left, thinking the Honey-eater would lay shortly; but on his return the third day he found that the egg of the Pallid Cuckoo had been thrown out of the nest by the Fantailed Cuckoo, *C. flabelliformis*, and she had laid an egg in the nest. The Honey-eater deserted the nest. This is the second time my friend has noticed this same proceeding."

This is an exceedingly interesting note, for rarely does the

Fantailed Cuckoo deposit its egg in an open nest. However, three other instances were observed by Mr. A. E. Brent, Tasmania, where the Fantailed Cuckoo is particularly partial to the covered nests of Sericornis, *S. humilis*. They occurred respectively in the open nests of the Black-capped Honey-eater, *M. melanocephalus*, the Dusky Robin, *P. vittata*, and the Wood Swallow, *A. sordidus*.

The following is Mr. Brent's note about the Dusky Robin's nest:—"I took a set of Dusky Robin's eggs from a nest built on a stump near home. In passing the place some days afterwards, I pointed it out to a friend. Going forward and inspecting the position, he exclaimed, 'Here is a find!' Upon going up to the nest too I found a beautiful specimen of the egg of our Fantailed Cuckoo. There is no doubt about this bird having deposited her egg there after I had robbed the nest."

In Tasmania a fresh egg of the Fantailed Cuckoo was found deposited on a bare stump. Doubtless it had been laid there by the bird, which was probably disturbed before it could convey it away to some suitable nest.

This cuckoo, as shown in Dr. Ramsay's statement, has been known to deposit its egg in a nest containing other species of cuckoo's egg. Here is a couplet from Mr. Brent's Tasmanian field notes which he kindly furnished me with:—

"I had the exceptionally good fortune to find a nest of our little Browntail, *Acanthiza*, containing two eggs of the parent bird, together with one egg each of the Fantailed, Bronze, and Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoos—a nice lot, and all fresh."

"In December last (1895) we came across a nest of the little Browntail in some short bushes, containing two eggs of the *Acanthiza* and one of the Bronze Cuckoo. Having nothing to carry them home in, we left them for three days, and upon returning for them we found the nest contained only one *Acanthiza*'s egg, one Bronze Cuckoo's, and also one Fantailed Cuckoo's; the other shell of the *Acanthiza*'s egg we picked up just outside of the nest."

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW VICTORIAN MOTH.

By J. A. KERSHAW.

THIS moth, belonging to the Geometridæ, does not appear to have been yet described; I have, therefore, named it *Pseudoterpna singularis*, from the peculiar position assumed by it when resting.

PSEUDOTERPNA SINGULARIS, n. sp.—Male and female.—Head and thorax grey, face whitish. Palpi white, blackish laterally; terminal joint moderate, rather slender; antennæ dark grey;



Campbell, Archibald James. 1898. "Notes on the Fan-tailed Cuckoo." *The Victorian Naturalist* 14, 100–104.

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